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## Letters to The Times

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## To Reduce Tensions

## Open-Skies Plan Seen Aided by Free Access to Samos Photographs

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NEW YORK TIMES:

The recent U-2 incident and the imminent orbiting of the observational satellite Samos make acute the difficulty of reducing international tension while continuing to gather information necessary for national security.

At the summit conference of 1955, President Eisenhower suggested a way of reconciling these two aims. He proposed that the United States and Russia each "provide within our countries facilities for aerial photography to the other country" in order to guard against the "possibility of great surprise attack, thus lessening danger and relaxing tension." This "open-skies" plan captured the imagination of the world, and later in 1955 the General Assembly of the United Nations approved the idea, 56--7, with no abstentions and only the Communist bloc opposed.

## Russian Opposition

In spite of the plan's obvious appeal, the Russians have consistently opposed it, except as a late stage in general disarmament. As Marshal Zhukov said in August of 1958, "Russians feel that the 'open-skies' plan amounts to an attempt at 'developing intelligence activities which will inevitably lead to mutual suspicion and still greater distrust between the U. S. S. R. and the United States of America.'" The plain fact seems to be that the United States considers such information essential to its security, while Russia finds this intelligence prejudicial to its own security.

Immediately after the launching of the Tiros weather satellite, The New York Times pointed out editorially that time is getting short for international agreement to prevent espionage by space inventions from becoming a course of greater international tension and new irritation. It has been unofficially reported, moreover, that Russia would regard intelligence photography by satellite of its territory as "an unfriendly act." This diplomatic phrase is full of ominous meaning, and it is in this light that we must evaluate the Samos project.

The Administration seems to find itself in an impasse. It wishes to reduce tension, but it also wishes to maintain military security; to reduce tension it must cancel Samos, to push the project through.

## Reaching Proposal

Yet the existence of this satellite may make possible for the first time a reduction of tensions together with an increase in military security. Until now President Eisenhower's "open-skies" plan could be nothing more than a proposal, unfulfilled unless the Russians agreed. However, with Samos, skies are opened unilaterally, and President Eisenhower's proposal can become a reality without Russian agreement.

Only one condition is necessary: complete access for all nations to the photographic facilities of Samos—photographs to be taken not only of the U. S. S. R., but of the United States as well. A Russia concerned with peace could have no objection to an observational satellite under these conditions, and at the same time any legitimate fears she might have of our aggressive intentions would be allayed.

President Eisenhower's "open-skies" plan would have achieved success, our military security would be strengthened by the opening of Russia's skies, and Russia's security would be strengthened by the opening of our skies—a unique combination of gains made possible by the technological achievement of Samos.

Perhaps the administration of such a plan would best be carried out by the United Nations; however it might be carried out, it would represent a significant advance in the reduction of cold-war tensions. The plan proposed here certainly involves difficulties of a high order. We feel, however, that the Administration could find ways of coping with these problems.

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Baltimore, May 28, 1960.

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